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ABSTRACT

According to the United States Department of Labor, 73% of drug users in 1997 were employed. Numerous studies, reports, and surveys suggest that substance abuse is having a negative effect on the workplace in terms of decreased productivity; increased accidents; absenteeism; turnover; and medical costs. However, workplace substance abuse is a problem for which a solution exists. When the issue is addressed by establishing comprehensive programs that include policy, education and training, testing, and access to treatment, benefits are felt by both employers and employees. This brief paper provides tips and resources that will help communities take action to reduce substance abuse. It includes a list of national organizations, publications, and names of community leaders who have expertise in community organizing. (JDM)

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# SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND THE WORKPLACE [1]

## Technical Assistance Packet

**Join Together:**
**A National Resource for Communities Fighting Substance Abuse and Gun Violence**

www.jointogether.org/

**April 2000**

ED 456 352

### Description of the Issue

According to the Department of Labor, 73% of all current drug users aged 18 and older (8.3 million adults) were employed in 1997. This includes 6.7 million full-time workers and 1.6 million part-time workers. More than 14 percent of Americans employed full- and part-time report heavy drinking. Numerous studies, reports and surveys suggest that substance abuse is having a profoundly negative effect on the workplace in terms of decreased productivity and increased accidents, absenteeism, turnover, and medical costs. For example, alcoholism causes 500 million lost workdays each year. Workplace substance abuse is a problem for which a solution exists. When the issue is addressed by establishing comprehensive programs, which often include a policy, education and training, testing, and access to treatment through Employee Assistance Programs or other resources, it benefits both employers and employees.

### National Organizations

*Drug Free Workplace Helpline*, The Center for Substance Abuse Prevention
The Workplace Helpline provides technical assistance and guidance in developing and evaluating programs and policies designed to address alcohol and drug abuse problems at work, including policy development, supervisor training, employee education, employee assistance programs, and drug testing. It also provides publications and materials.
Tel: 800-WORKPLACE; www.health.org/pubs/workcap.htm

*Drugs Don't Work*
Drugs Don't Work produces an excellent folder, called "Resources and Materials" which is full of information about treatment, legal issues, drug testing, training, and employee support. For more information and copies of the DDW newsletter, send a request to:
Drugs Don't Work Forum, New York City Partnership and New York Chamber of Commerce, One Battery Park Plaza, New York, NY 10004-1479; Tel: 800-883-DRUG

*The United States Department of Labor* (DOL)
Within the framework of its overall mission to help American companies maintain safe, healthy and productive workplaces, the Department of Labor has established Working Partners for an Alcohol and Drug-Free American Workplace. Working Partners has gathered facts and figures about alcohol and drug abuse and developed information on how to establish an alcohol- and drug-free workplace.
Tel: 202-219-6197; www.dol.gov/dol/asp/public/programs/drugs/main.htm

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*The American Council for Drug Education*
The American Council for Drug Education is a substance abuse prevention and education agency that develops programs and materials based on the most current scientific research on drug use and its impact on society. A section of their website, Facts for Employers, is intended to help the business community realize the power it has to enable workers across America to deal with drug use and the possibility of drug use – by their children, their friends and neighbors, and their co-workers.
164 W. 74th Street, New York, NY 10023; Tel: 800-488-DRUG; www.acde.org/Default.asp

*Employee Assistance Professionals Association*
The EAP Association (EAPA) is the largest, professional association for persons in the employee assistance program field. EAPA represents more than 7,000 individuals and organizations with an interest in employee assistance in 103 chapters around the globe.
2101 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 500, Arlington, Virginia 22201; Tel: 703-387-1000; Fax: 703-522-4585; www.eap-association.com/

**Publications and How to Order Them**

*The publications listed here are both free and of modest cost.*

- *Join Together Strategies: A Focus on Business, Labor and Coalitions Working Together.* This issue of the Join Together Strategies Newsletter focuses on how businesses can address substance abuse issues. Volume 6, Number 1, Winter/Spring 1997. www.jointogether.org/sa/resources/materials/reader.jtml?Object_ID=26077

- *Working Partners Substance Abuse Information Database* (SAID) – This interactive database provides a one-stop source of information with summaries and full text of materials relating to workplace substance abuse issues. www.dol.gov/dol/asp/public/programs/drugs/said.htm

- *Making Your Workplace Drug Free: A Kit for Employers.* (1994, CSAP) Designed for employers, especially employers of smaller businesses, this kit offers easy-to-follow steps for creating or enhancing a drug-free workplace program. Available through NCADI: Tel: 1-800-729-6686; www.health.org/wpkit/index.htm.

- *Creating a Drug-Free Workplace Policy.* (1997, CSAP), 3 pp.
Designed for employers, this booklet provides tips for creating a drug-free workplace policy. The booklet includes reasons for creating a written policy and suggestions for adjusting another organization's policy to meet your needs. Available through NCADI: Tel: 1-800-729-6686.

**Community Leaders**

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**Community Stories**

*Stories listed below are reprinted from Join Together Online. Similar stories can be found at* www.jointogether.org/.

**The Regional Drug Initiative (RDI)** in Portland, Oregon knows that business and labor are vital pieces of the solution to drug problems. They have offered workshops to help employers develop drug policies for their workplaces. In addition, RDI provides telephone technical assistance to more than 600 employers a year. RDI is involved with labor issues and has developed a model labor-management guidebook called "Labor and Management: Working Together for a Drug-Free Workplace". Contact Carol Stone at 503-294-7074.

**The Marshall Heights Fighting Back Partnership** in Washington, DC realized that jobs are an important part of the aftercare process for recovering addicts. They offer a 24-week life skills class where people are trained for high-tech jobs that require computer skills, including mastering word processing, database and spreadsheet programs. Participants have received jobs in doctor's and lawyer's offices, banks, real estate companies, hotels, foundations, nonprofit associations and local service businesses. Contact Emerson Harris at 202-397-7300 or Gaurdia Banister at 202-269-7667.